

al. fail to disclose or teach of a bonding region wherein the outside wall surface of a first tube is bonded to the outside wall surface of a second tube.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

Claims 49-55 and 61-64 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Sirhan et al.* Applicants' independent claim 49 includes the limitation of a bonding region wherein the outside wall surface of a first tube is bonded to the outside wall surface of a second tube. As described above, it has been previously agreed that *Sirhan et al.* fail to disclose this limitation. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit this structural difference distinguishes claim 49 from *Sirhan et al.*, and that claim 49 is in condition for allowance. Because claims 50-55 and 61-64 depend from claim 49, they are allowable based on these remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 56, 67, 69, and 73 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Fontirroche et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,538,510). Because claims 56, 67, 69, and 73 depend from allowable claim 49, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claims 57, 66, 68, 70, and 74 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Fontirroche et al.* as applied above, and further in view of *Berg et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,792,116). . Because claims 57, 66, 68, 70, and 74 depend from allowable claim 49, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the

elements of Applicants' claims.

Claim 58 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Javier, Jr. et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,093,177). Because claim 58 depends from allowable claim 49, it is allowable based on the above remarks and because it adds significant elements to distinguish it from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claims 59, 65, and 71 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Javier, Jr. et al.* as applied to claim 58 above and further in view of *Fontirroche et al.* Because claims 59, 65, and 71 depend from allowable claim 49, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claims 60 and 72 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Javier, Jr. et al.*, further in view of *Fontirroche et al.* as applied to claim 59, and further in view of *Berg et al.* Because claims 60 and 72 depend from allowable claim 49, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claims 75-81 and 87-90 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Ressemann et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,743,875). As described in relation to claim 49 above, independent claim 75 also includes the element of a bonding region wherein the outside wall surface of a first tube is bonded to the outside wall surface of a second tube. Neither *Sirhan et al.* alone or in combination include this element. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit

that claim 75 is distinguishable from *Sirhan et al.* and is in condition for allowance. Because claims 76-81 and 87-90 depend from allowable claim 75, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art.

Claims 82, 93, 95, and 99 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Ressemann et al.* as applied above and further in view of *Fontirroche et al.* Because claims 82, 93, 95, and 99 depend from allowable claim 75, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claim 83 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Ressemann et al.* as applied above and further in view of *Berg et al.* Because claim 83 depends from allowable claim 75, it is allowable based on the above remarks and because it adds significant elements to distinguish it from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claims 94, 96, and 100 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Ressemann et al.* as applied above and further in view of *Fontirroche et al.* and further in view of *Berg et al.* Because claims 94, 96, and 100 depend from allowable claim 75, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claim 84 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Ressemann et al.* as applied above and further in view of *Javier Jr. et al.* Because claim 84 depends from allowable claim 75, it is allowable based on the above remarks and because it adds significant

elements to distinguish it from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claims 85, 91, and 97 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Ressemann et al.* as applied above and further in view of *Javier Jr. et al.* Because claims 85, 91, and 97 depend from allowable claim 75, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

Claims 86, 92, and 98 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Sirhan et al.* in view of *Ressemann et al.* as applied above and further in view of *Javier Jr. et al.*, further in view of *Fontirroche et al.* and further in view of *Berg et al.* Because claims 86, 92, and 98 depend from allowable claim 75, they are allowable based on the above remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them from the prior art. Additionally, the combination of references does not include all the elements of Applicants' claims.

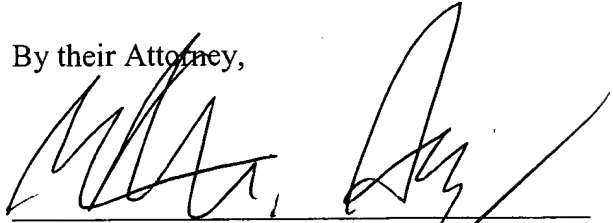
Conclusion

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested. It is respectfully submitted that the claims are now in condition for allowance, issuance of a Notice of Allowance in due course is requested. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at (612) 677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

TIMOTHY M. STIVLAND ET AL.

By their Attorney,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn M. Seager', written over a horizontal line.

Glenn M. Seager, Reg. No. 36,926
CROMPTON, SEAGER & TUTTE, LLC
331 Second Avenue South, Suite 895
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401-2246
Telephone: (612) 677-9050
Facsimile: (612) 359-9349

Date: Dec. 30, 2002

Dec. 30, 2002